



# the Binnacle

*Newsletter of the Lake Champlain Yacht Club, Inc.*

Commodore: Doug Merrill  
Binnacle Editor: Tony Lamb



**Gary Jobson will present on Friday, April 10 at 6:30 at-  
Main Street Landing. Details on reservations and  
more information on page 4.**



**Spring Work Day May 9th. Starts at 8 a.m. More in-  
formation on page 5.**



**All Hands on Deck for the Opening Cocktail Party  
May 30th 6 pm Details on page 6**

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## Commodore's Corner

I believe it is safe to say that all of our membership, with the possible exception of those who headed South for the winter, will agree that it has been a LONG winter. Over 30 iceboats sailed the broad lake the *last* weekend in March. I was fortunately to be one of them! My family was treated to 7" of fresh powder on April 5<sup>th</sup>, a date that we are usually skiing corn snow on borrowed time. In many ways, it seems like winter will go on forever.

But spring and summer are lurking behind every corner. Friday evening we were treated (cruelly, some feel) to a 65 degree evening and enjoyed grilling and al fresco dining on the patio. Facebook photos of friends and family in Maryland have budding trees in the background. My as-yet unstarted varnishing projects for MOOvin' seem to stare more urgently at me every time I descend to the basement.

The clearest sign of spring so far is the upcoming LCYC hosted talk that Gary Jobson will be holding this Friday, April 10 starting at 6:00 at Main Street Landing. Gary will present a multi-media review of the past year in sailing. From America's cup follow up to classic big boats to collegiate racing, Gary will have some beautiful footage and witty, insightful commentary sure to appeal to anyone who has hauled up a halyard. We'll have drinks and chowder prior to the talk and desserts afterward, so it will be a great time to reconnect with your crew and fellow sailors and talk about plans for the summer.

Gary's talk and the camaraderie to follow will be great motivators to head to the yard, pull of the cover, and work through your winter punchlist. Spring workday is Saturday, May 9, just a month away. As I stare out over ice-covered Shelburne Bay, it seems hard to believe. But it will be here before we know it. Get Busy! See you Friday night.

Doug Merrill  
Commodore



Local Sailor Paul Gervais spotted this 'iceberg' drifting from Colchester Reef toward Juniper Island on April 5. It is likely over 100' long and 6-8' tall. No word on whether or not the Coast Guard will issue a 'Notice to Mariners.'"



The starting Line for the DN Eastern Championships on Broad Lake on March 28. Twenty Four boats raced, including LCYC members Don Brush and Doug Merrill and local sailors Paul Gervais, Jack Millbank, and Ron Bouchard. The New England Champs were held the following day



## An Evening with Gary Jobson

Lake Champlain Yacht Club, in partnership with Mallet's Bay Boat Club, Shelburne Shipyard, Fox Marine and presenting sponsor **Vermont Sailing Partners**, is pleased to present world class sailor, author, and America's Cup commentator: **Gary Jobson** with his presentation:

**"An Overview of Sailing in the World Today"**

**Friday April 10 at 6:30pm.**

The event will be held at [Main Street Landing](#)

Gary will share his inside stories about the 2016 Rio Olympics, America's Cup review, 1979 Fastnet Race, Collegiate Teams, Speed Sailing, and the ever popular "Crash and Burn" sequences!

Reception before and after program includes book signing, cash bar, and appetizers. All proceeds support the Community Sailing Center.

Tickets are **\$15** for adults and **\$5** for youth and student sailors.

Please purchase tickets in advance through the link below on the [Community Sailing Center's web-site](#).

Or, LCYC members can reserve a seat via email through [reservations@lcyc.info](mailto:reservations@lcyc.info) info and pay for their ticket at the door. Reminder that all reservations will be billed.

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## **Spring Work Day May 9th. Starts at 8 a.m.**

While some folks will focus on the docks than need launching, or the grounds that need prepping, or the launches that need prepping, or the junior sailing boats that need prepping, or the club house that needs cleaning and setting up or the awning that needs putting back, others will focus coffee pots that need draining or doughnut boxes that need emptying or the proper manner to prepare a bagel.

Still others will focus on the work day as an expected day of participation by all Club members, while others will focus on finding alternative ways to participate or to make up for their absence by contacting Bob Gurwicz responsible for house and grounds.

For me the best moments are when the work is done and you can look around the Club and see the transformation of the Club from it's dormant state to one of being alive and active. Perhaps even better is the opportunity to catch up with old friends over a cold beer and hot chilli.

Tony Lamb

### **LCYC Needs Carpenters and Painters**

LCYC is in need of a Carpentry Team Leader and a Painting/Staining Team Leader. We will also need volunteers work under the guidance of the team leaders to assist in replacing wood trim and some rotting wood on the exterior of the clubhouse, as well as volunteers to assist with the painting/staining of the exterior of the clubhouse. Please contact Bob Gurwicz [bobgurwicz@gmail.com](mailto:bobgurwicz@gmail.com) if you are available for one of the above team leader positions, or if you will be able to help with these maintenance/repair jobs. We are hoping to tackle some of these jobs before spring work day. Thanks, Bob



LAKE CHAMPLAIN YACHT CLUB

## *Ahoy Summer!*

*Celebrate the Season  
at the 2015  
LCYC Opening Cocktail Party*

*Date: Saturday, May 30*

*Time: 1800 Hours (6:00 pm)*

*Place: Lake Champlain Yacht Club*

*Attire: Think Cocktail Party*

*Hosts: Steven and Charlotte Adams*

*Reservations: Not required*

*Questions: (518) 371-2275*

*Please Bring: A Hors d'oeuvre to share. Please  
identify any allergens that may be  
in your Hors d'oeuvre.*

*BYOB: Bring your choice of Beverage including any  
Mixer. Ice will be provided.*

## Shelburne Shipyard Steamship Graveyard

By John Harris

LCYC was well represented at the Friday February 13<sup>th</sup> Shelburne Historical Society hosted presentation by Chris Sabick of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum regarding the work being done in Shelburne Bay by LCMM in conjunction with the Nautical Archeology program at Texas A&M.

This past June LCMM hosted Texas A&M's Underwater Archeology Field School where professors and students came for 3 weeks of academic instruction and hands on underwater archeological research right here in Shelburne Bay. The focus of the school was on a steamship graveyard surrounding the Shelburne Shipyard. Chris described the work of the team in identifying and documenting 4 wrecks situated in 10-12' of water on the south side of the cove in which the Shipyard is located, in the area of Askey's marina. This coming June the Field School will be returning for a second session with focus on detailed exploration and documentation of one of the 4 wrecks.

Some of the wrecks are actually located underneath the docks and boats at Askey's, which added some interesting challenges to the underwater work. Chris described in some detail the forensic processes by which they determined the identity of each wreck as well as the various construction features that were used to determine the age and thereby helping with the identification. The oldest of the 4 steamships was constructed in the early 1830's and the newest in the 1860's. These are 4 of a dozen or more steamboats that were scuttled in Shelburne Bay, most, but not all, in the im-

mediate proximity of the Shipyard. The wreck in the LCYC mooring field is one of these which is not so close to the Shipyard. Unfortunately the talk did not touch at all on this wreck, as it is not part of the current research project.

If you are wondering what all these steamboats are doing on the bottom of the bay, as Chris described it, this area was basically the Shipyard's dump. The practice at the time, for both convenience and economic reasons, was to decommission the steamboats by stripping them of all that was valuable, including engines and most of the superstructure, and then parking the remaining hulls in shallow water allowing nature to take its course. Eventually the hulls sank with the remains being preserved on the bottom of the bay. Chris showed some pictures from the 1800's showing the south end of the Shipyard cove filled with derelict steamboats. The steamships typically had a useful life of 30 years or less, so that lead to quite a few derelict vessels over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century steamship era.

Chris described in some detail the process of measuring and documenting their findings, along with the challenges of working in murky, weed filled waters while dodging boats coming and going from Askey's. These were large boats, ranging in size from 132 feet to over 200 feet in length. Most of the structural timbers are still intact, although many of them are buried in the mud, and in the case of one wreck under a massive rock pile (presumably used to keep the hull submerged?), making the archeological work challenging. He also shared pictures of rudders and other elements that

are remarkably well preserved given the 100-150+ years these hulls have been on the bottom of the lake.

In all it was a fascinating overview of some of the unique maritime history which lies at the bottom of our very own Shelburne Bay. The fact that a team is coming all the way from Texas emphasizes the importance of Lake Champlain as a repository of early American maritime history.

As noted above, team will be back at it this June, so check it out if you are interested.

More details on the project can be found at:

[https://www.academia.edu/9396367/Shelburne\\_Shipyard\\_Steamboat\\_Graveyard](https://www.academia.edu/9396367/Shelburne_Shipyard_Steamboat_Graveyard)

## **Etchells Fleet News – Spring 2015**

By John Harris, Fleet Captain

Well another winter is behind us (on the calendar at least) and, with the exception of a few fleet members who made the trek to Biscayne Bay to sail in the Jaguar Series, the fleet has been pretty dormant. Ernie Pomerleau and team had another respectable showing, finishing 13<sup>th</sup> out of 58 in the highly competitive 4 regatta series that runs from December to March. The good news for the fleet is that USA 1300 is rumored to be migrating back to her summer home at LCYC this summer where she always pushes the rest of the fleet to higher levels of performance.

Speaking of this summer, things are shaping up for another great season with the fleet growing to 11 boats competing for the Kelemen Cup. Bring it on !!! Who out there would like to bring the fleet size to a nice even dozen? Contact myself or any other fleet member for more information. Also, as in past years, the Fleet will also be hosting one of the Wednesday Night Burger Burns again this season.

Lastly, the Etchells portion of the LCYC web site was updated over the winter, so check that out.

Think Spring !!!!

## SAILBOAT RACING 2015

Gerry Davis  
Regatta Chair, LCYC

The racing season is almost here! Now is the time to start thinking about getting your boat tuned to go fast, lining up a steady crew, and start dreaming about crossing the finish line with your spinnaker pulling hard in a fresh breeze and the aroma of “burning burgers” in the air.

Your first stop should be the LCYC website ([lcyc.info](http://lcyc.info)). The in-house web gnomes have been working hard all winter to raise the site to a new level, and have done a great job with many photographs and several new functions. To register your boat on the LCYC website, you sign in with a password, then fill in the information about your sailboat and indicate your tentative racing plans. Err on the side of registering for a race even if the chances are low that you will sail in it; it is easier to scratch an entrant than to register one at the last minute.

Check out the new “Crew Match” web page – there you can list your needs for crew, if you have any, and can post names for availability. If you have occasional crew that you might be willing to share with other boats that need them, please have them post their names, contact information, and experience level. This should be a great way to get members and non-members out on the water who do not race regularly or are looking for racing experience.

Sailboat racing at LCYC is organized through the Regatta Committee, chaired by a member of the Board of Governors and staffed by volunteers from all racing classes. The races are run under the rules and procedures of US Sailing. A dedicated group of “Principal Race Officers” under the leadership of Keith Kennedy has trained extensively in the rules of racing and how to conduct sailboat races. Basic and Advanced seminars conducted by US Sailing were held this year in March and April to hone the skills of this team. One or more PRO’s are joined aboard the *Dinse* by a Race Committee designated from among the skippers and crew of regular racers. Each skipper is expected to serve with his or her crew as a Race Committee once every two years. The PRO organizes this team each week and makes the decisions about course and timing, while the Race Committee handles flags, watches starts for infractions, and records finish times. Serving as Race Committee is excellent for learning more about exactly how races are run.

The “Racing” section of the LCYC website is now home base for everything related to sailboat racing at LCYC. All of the documents explaining courses, marks, signals, and race details are posted. The class splits for races are listed. Current results will be found there as races take place. The Principal Race Officer (PRO) and Race Committee assignments will be filled in. Additional information about one-design racing, our trophies and their history, results from pre-

vious years, and procedures for protests are all included. Mark this webpage on your smart phone for ready access and frequent use.

The class splits for Wednesday nights and weekend races may change slightly prior to the season in order to balance the number of boats in the Spinnaker fleet: A (PHRF <90), B (PHRF 90 -126, light displacement), C (PHRF 90-126, heavy displacement), and D (PHRF >126). Other classes include all Jib & Main (JAM) boats, Etchells, and a variety of sportboats. The starting sequences are shown as well. There is “Fleet Captain” for each of these classes whose role is to bring information to the class, spur enthusiasm within the class for LCYC racing, and bring back ideas and concerns from the class to the Regatta Committee and the PRO group.

Our LCYC racing season kicks off with a “Practice Event” starting at 6:10 on Wednesday May 20, 2015. This will feature a series of practice starts and a short “around the buoys” race. The on-the-water practice will be followed by a dry-land session on race procedures led by our PRO’s. Bring out your regular crew for both the starts and the chalk talk. Regular Wednesday night racing starts May 27, and runs every week through September 23. Note that the summer start time of 6:10 PM moves to 5:25 PM for the September “D” series. Awards are given in each class for each of the monthly series. Burger burns, pizza night, the famous “Oktoberfest in September”, and other special events are planned for Wednesday nights after racing.

The traditional trophy-rich weekend racing series stretches from the opening horn of the “Tea Kettle” on June 6 through the final finish of the “Hot-Ruddered Bum” on October 4. Other races based at LCYC include the “Double-Handed” (6/20) and “Odziozo” (6/27) races in June, the “Ladies Cup” (8/1), “Lady Skipper” (8/8), and “Schuyler Island” races in August, and the “Commodore Macdonough” (9/12) race in September. Important races sponsored by other organizations include the Valcour Sailing Club “Plattsburgh Mayor’s Cup” events (7/11), the Malletts Bay Boat Club “Lake Champlain Race” (7/17 – 7/19), the fund-raiser “Regatta for Lake Champlain” (7/25), and the Royal Savage Yacht Club “Diamond Island Regatta” (8/22). Note that the LCYC final race, the “Hot-Ruddered Bum” will be held on *Sunday* October 4 to avoid conflict with the MBBC “Benedict Arnold Race” on Saturday October 3. The weekend races held by clubs throughout the Lake have been drawn together as the “Lake Champlain Championship Series”, with two series categories. The results from 5 out of 6 major weekend races (Cannon Series) or 5 other races (Champlain Series) determine an overall “Cannon Trophy” winner and PHRF class winners. The LCYC races and other events held by our sister clubs are listed on the LCYC calendar.

Soon the summer will be with us. Get it started right now by organizing your sailboat-racing season, and fire up your crew. How about a Mud Season crew party?

## Harbor Commissioning, Spring 2015

Pierre will be commissioning the LCYC mooring field shortly – he generally starts right after the ice clears out, in mid to late April. Once he gets started, all moorings are hooked up over the course of several days, and all mooring balls, pennants and pick up buoys need to at the club before he starts . I wanted to pass on these reminders so the process runs smoothly:

- All mooring balls are laid out on the lawn, in the order they came out of the water. If you work on your ball, please be sure to put it back in the same place you pick it up.
- Some members prefer to take pennants and pick-up buoys home for the winter. If you do, please be sure you have them back to LCYC and re-connected before spring commissioning.
- Owners are responsible for the condition of their pennants, and you are encouraged to inspect them before Pierre goes to work. Presumably you already know of any wear at the chocks or cleat, but this is a good time to check the other end which connects to the chain.
- If Pierre sees a badly worn pennant, he will remove it rather than commission an unsafe one and will contact the owner about replacement.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Joss Besse  
LCYC Harbormaster  
434-3764  
[besse@gmavt.net](mailto:besse@gmavt.net)

## Remembering Betty Sproston

Betty Sproston died this spring at age 103. As one of the members of the Club who helped revive it, it is important to remember this gentle woman who added a touch of class to what might otherwise might have been just a group of rowdy sailors. Below is a reprint of an article by Bern Collins that the Binnacle published two years ago.

### Betty's Journey from Baltimore to the University of Vermont, the *Burlington Free Press*, Lake Champlain and LCYC.

Betty Sproston Little was born in Baltimore, Maryland, a member of the Herman Born family, who started a blacksmith and wagon manufacturing business in 1852. Betty says that during the Civil War they made their reputation making wagon wheels that "never broke." When the horse and wagon became obsolete, they switched to building truck bodies, and it is still family-owned and operated, spanning six generations. Betty attended a Quaker Friends School, the same as her father, and then went to Syracuse University, where she majored in journalism. It was during her senior year that she met Thomas Sproston, who was from Greenwich, Connecticut.

After Tom and Betty married, they spent six years at Cornell University. While Tom studied for his doctorate in botany, Betty worked as secretary to the Summer Session Director and she remembers these years as "some of the best." After receiving his Ph.D. in 1942, Tom was given an Army deferment to go to Amherst, where he taught physics to Air Force Cadets until the end of World War II. Tom then became an Assistant Professor in Botany at the University of Vermont, and after arriving in Burlington in 1946, he and Betty found an apartment on Ma-



*Betty Sproston and the Winner of the 2012 Ladies Cup Overall Trophy Ernie Pomerleau*

ple Street.

Betty decided to use her degree in journalism to get a reporter's job at the *Burlington Free Press*. During her job interview with the owner, David Howe, he told her that during World War II the only reporters he could find were women and he was "tired of women." In other words, at a time when gender bias was still widely practiced, being a woman meant no job for Betty. Undeterred, she grabbed a copy of that day's paper, went back to the Maple Street apartment, rewrote one of the major stories and took it

back to Mr. Howe. He gave her the reporter's job, which she held for the next 29 years!

Shortly after their arrival, Betty saw a house at 447 Main Street that had some architecturally unique features; it was conveniently located near UVM's Green, and she decided that was where they would live. She learned it was the former home of the coachman to UVM's president and, after they moved in, the horse barn on the property became a "perfect office for Tom." They lived there for 34 years, until Tom retired as Professor Emeritus of Botany. It was at this historic house that they entertained fellow professors and their spouses, students, and, after 1969, members of the Lake Champlain Yacht Club.

In 1976, Tom became commodore at LCYC, with Betty an active "LCYC First Lady." That year they hosted a special party that combined the nation's Bicentennial with the Ladies Cup Regatta. Earlier, as a *Free Press* reporter, she had enjoyed writing stories about LCYC events after reactivation. In the 1950s, during the club's dormant years, she wrote several *Burlington Free Press* articles about the Ladies Cup and Milo C. Reynolds' reactivation efforts. She always took a keen interest in LCYC's history, particularly during her years later as club historian.

After Tom's death, Betty accepted on his behalf the Yachtsman of the Year Trophy, awarded posthumously in 1988. She later married George T. Little, UVM Political Science Professor Emeritus, and they eventually became

among the first residents at Wake Robin. Although they used to enjoy traveling all over the world, their health needs now require them both to be at Wake Robin's Linden Life Care. Betty's age remains a closely guarded secret, but George recently celebrated his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday! They continue to participate in many of the activities at Wake Robin, read books, follow the political news with avid interest, and George enjoys spending hours in front of his computer, where they can both follow LCYC news, including reading the *Binnacle* online.

On December 17, 2012, I arranged to have Ernie Pomerleau meet with Betty for a photograph with the new trophy. It was a reunion of sorts as Betty used to write articles about Ernie's father, Tony Pomerleau, and his many business enterprises for the *Free Press*; and, as noted earlier, Betty and Tom were among the first LCYC members Ernie met when he joined in 1976.

Although Betty has been a LCYC member for 44 years, and her *Burlington Free Press* articles are now in LCYC's archives, many newer members have never met her. For those of us who have known Betty over the years, however, she embodies the LCYC spirit, particularly its connection to the Ladies Cup, the 1888 founding of the Regatta, and dinners of the past, which she recalls with great fondness: "...the long dresses, high heels, an orchestra playing, white tablecloths, china, crystal, and LCYC members dancing." It is appropriate that the new Ladies Cup perpetual trophy in her name is an elegant Simon Pearce glass sailboat, engraved with the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Logo.

## **Scuttlebutt \*** (another word for Editor's Notes)

I was painting my daughter's condo in Boston. The first I knew that he was coming was a text message that said "Will is on the train, where do you want him to get off." Phil and I took a guess as to what train he might be on and texted back "128-what time should we expect him?" After no answer, I called his father who gave me his cell and I called. Will had no idea where he was or when he would get in, but would call me when he found out. (We assume they teach navigation and logistics in the upper classes at the Coast Guard Academy.) An hour later, not having heard from either him or my daughter we called him again and he said he had just left Providence. (40 minutes away.) Ten minutes later he called to tell us he was at The 128 station.

I tell this story because, after words my daughter said "It isn't amazing that with all the tools we have communications are still a problem."

If you have been watching the website and the nature of the emails from the Club you can see that Marc Gamble the new Board Member responsible for communications is trying to help us improve the way we communicate. I often see emails between Club leadership asking questions about the best way to communicate something, so it will be effective, not too much or too little. When I have conversation on this topic I am surprised how often a way that I like is really disliked by another and vice versa. Too many choices. And we change overtime. I did not think I would like reading a paper on line but have grown to appreciate the ways that it can be better. I hope that members give feed back to all who try to communicate-as to what works and doesn't and what else they would like to see.

Turns out Will need a place to stay the night before a safety at sea program that qualifies him to race Annapolis to Marion next summer. I am sure that you will be relieved to know that he was finally able to schedule the six weeks of required sailing aboard the Eagle this time in two three week blocks around his racing schedule. The first block is to Key West, the second is to Bermuda.

I have been following the Rosner Blog with interest. At least after I was able to get past their suffering unexpected 80 degree temperatures during the day. I was never worried as they struggle with what side the green buoy should be on which changes with their direction and the nature of the navigable waters. I wasn't even worried when they talked about poorly marked shoals and anchorages. I was worried when I heard they were going to have drinks with gentlemen Rielly, Lyman and Bergman. Maybe I have to move beyond my memories of the good old days.

Peace,  
Tony Lamb, Editor